



NEUSCHAFER
COMMUNITY
LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLANNING

ORGANIZED BY:

The Strategic Planning
Committee under guidance
of the Neuschafer
Community Library Board

2022-2025



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INTRODUCTION



The Neuschafer Community Library is located in the Village of Fremont, a small community in Waupaca County with a big heart. Surrounded by natural beauty, it is an ideal location to raise a family, vacation, or retire. The library, like the Wolf River it overlooks, connects communities from surrounding municipalities, serving as a gathering place for patrons to access resources, build relationships, and enrich their lives.

The library held a rededication ceremony in June 2021, following a major renovation made possible by the Marilyn Taylor/Wohlt Creamery Fund. With the start of a new chapter, the Neuschafer Library Board of Trustees and new library director took the opportunity to join the Wisconsin Library Services Small Library cohort for strategic planning.

With the guidance of our community survey, data collection, and core values, the strategic plan was formed to continue the library's mission to educate, empower, enrich, entertain, and inspire.

Strategic goals and achievable objectives have been carefully crafted and established to position the library to maximize the impact it has on the community. In the course of the next three years, the Neuschafer Community Library will work to meet the goals laid out in this plan by using the strategic statement to navigate its way.



The strategic planning committee was formed to guide survey results into tangible and measurable goals. The committee consists of community stakeholders from:

- **Director and library staff**
- **Friends of the Neuschafer Community Library**
- **Library Board**
- **Village of Fremont**
- **Weyauwega/Fremont School District**

This collaboration was to ensure the process was thoughtfully assessed and multiple facets were reflected.

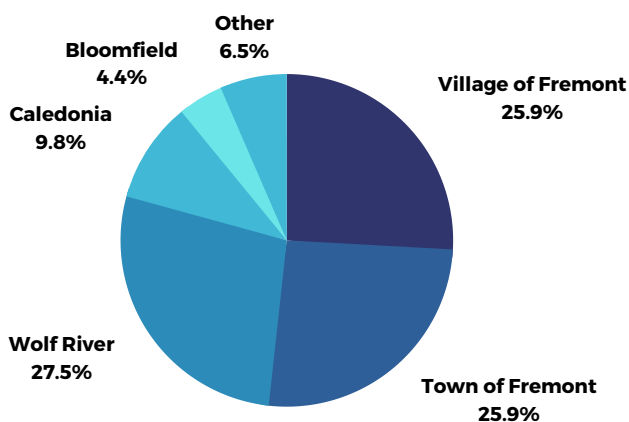
To execute this strategic plan, the Neuschafer Community Library Director and staff worked in conjunction with the Library Board to prioritize, identify service goals, and coordinate activities from this plan. As we move forward, the library will consider available resources, including funding and staff time, and opportunities that arise to innovate during the implementation of the plan.

Lastly, on an ongoing basis, the library will continue to think strategically and regularly assess its activities to ensure the goals of the plan are realized with the flexibility to adapt as needed. As part of this, the Library will regularly update the Library Board and communicate the progress of the strategic plan to the community.

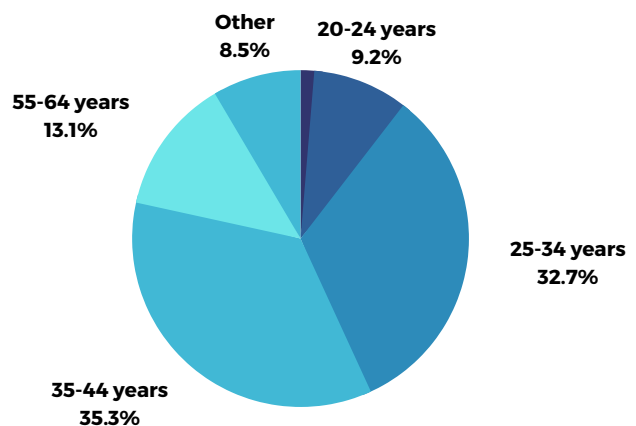
DATA COLLECTION

In 2022, Neuschafer Community Library conducted a survey in support of strategic planning efforts. The survey was designed in collaboration with Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS), before being disseminated to the broader community in both electronic and paper form. The survey was advertised through a variety of channels and generated responses from over 200 community members, including both users and non-users of the library itself. Community survey responses were conducted between January 2022 and February 2022.

Respondent's Primary Residence



Respondent ages



The survey respondents highlighted their ideas and broader desires for the library, while the following sources of information provided a deeper understanding of the people we serve so we can best support our community.

- Annual report data submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).
- Demographics from the U.S. Census and Wisconsin Population and Housing Estimates.
- Issues and Needs Questionnaire, completed by members of the Planning Committee.
- Demographics from 2019-2020 Public Enrollment by District by Ethnicity

MAKING AN IMPACT

Over the years, the staff and volunteers of the Neuschafer Community Library have done an excellent job in creating a welcoming space and we are proud of the foundation that has been built.



PATRONS

1,031 registered
library users in
2021



CIRCULATION

17,855 total
checkouts in 2021



PROGRAMS

34 in person programs
with **733** individuals in
attendance in 2021

Once the community survey result data was collected, the Strategic Planning Committee was grateful to find that the respondents agree, that the library is a vital part of the community that creates learning opportunities, a safe space, and promotes literacy and the love of learning for all ages.

Patrons also shared satisfaction with:

- Material availability
- The interlibrary loan system
- Checkout at the circulation desk
- Getting assistance from staff
- Returning materials.

***"The library is an important place
to me and/or my family."***



However, in analyzing the survey results and collecting the most recent data, there were a lot of opportunities to maximize our impact. The Strategic Planning Committee grouped these goals into three major themes: Innovation, Inclusion, and Community. These themes will drive the goals and plans for the library.

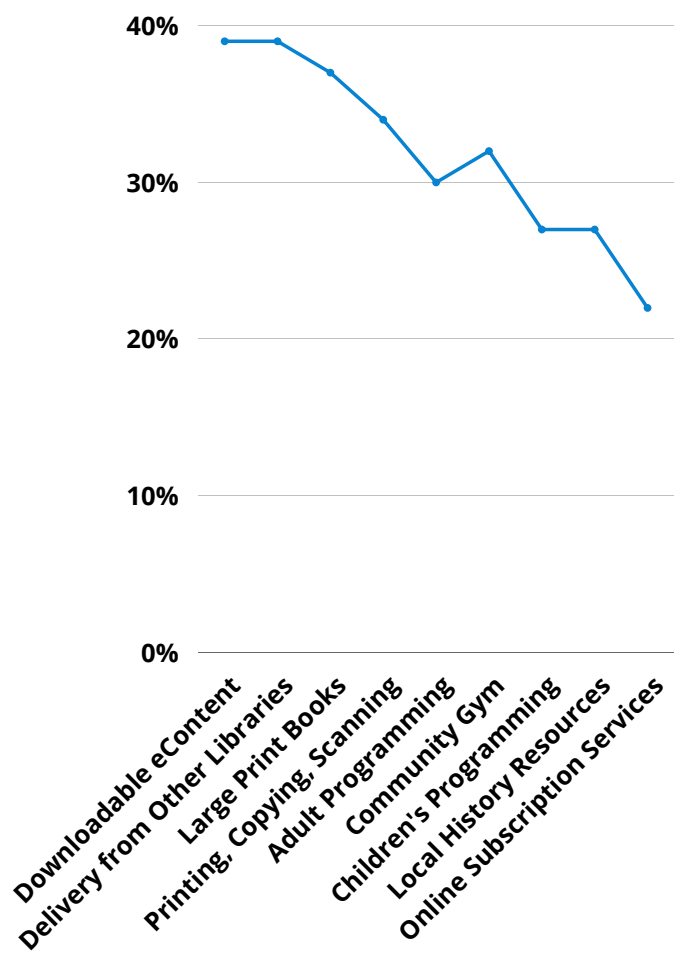
STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

INNOVATION-INCLUSION-COMMUNITY

CREATE A MARKETING PLAN TO EDUCATE ON LIBRARY RESOURCES

Less than 50% of regular library users indicated awareness of the following services: downloadable econtent, access to online subscription databases, and programming for adults, teens, and children. Our goals will include:

- ☐ Aid in access to Wi-Fi, circulation laptops, and internet
- ☐ Consider expanding social media platforms and online footprint
- ☐ Create informational videos on library resources and services
- ☐ Continue in-person education on library services
- ☐ Hold events and programs that utilize services (local history resources, community gym, etc.)



The community survey revealed a considerable demographic that does not currently use digital media. Upon further inquiries from patrons, most responded that they were unaware of such services. Since there are patrons from rural municipalities, it would be ideal to remove barriers to high-speed internet, wi-fi, and access to computers. A marketing campaign should be planned to educate and bring awareness to offered services. Quick, step-by-step web videos will help less tech-savvy patrons take advantage of online services offered even when they are unable to visit the library in person.

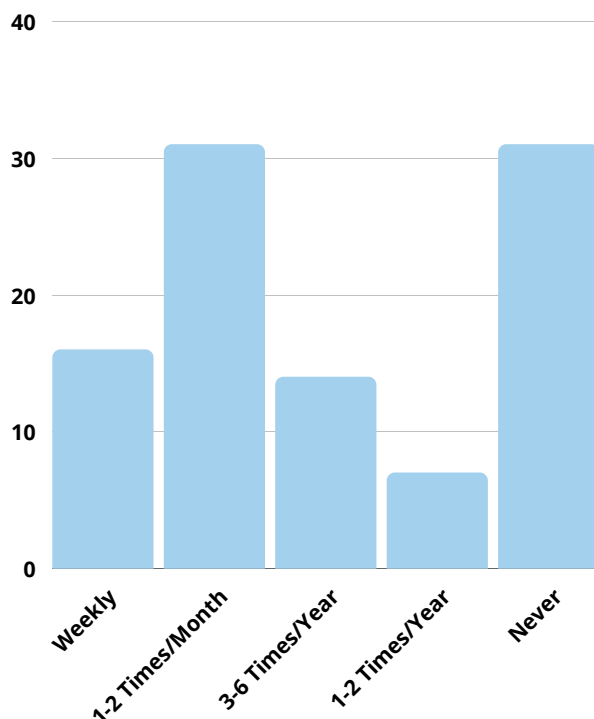
STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

INNOVATION-INCLUSION-COMMUNITY

GROW AWARENESS AND USAGE OF THE LIBRARY'S AVAILABLE ONLINE RESOURCES

Approximately half of the community members indicated that they access digital items such as eBooks and audiobooks through platforms such as Overdrive, Libby, or the library's catalog. Equally, 31% of respondents said they access digital media 1-2 times a month or never.

- ☐ Update and modernize website for ease of use for visitors
- ☐ Educate users on Infosoup, Overdrive, Libby, Tumblebooks and other resources
- ☐ Create step-by-step tutorials for online resources (Pamphlet and web video version)
- ☐ Ensure library staff is trained, knowledgeable, and able to communicate set-up processes



AN EQUAL MAJORITY OF PATRONS SAID THEY ACCESS DIGITAL MEDIA 1-2 TIMES A MONTH OR NEVER.

Survey participants were found to primarily be regular users of digital media or not at all. Many patrons who never accessed online resources were unaware of what the library provided or felt that the setup to utilize them was a barrier. The library website must be updated for ease of use that will provide quick and easy access to information being sought. Library staff will be further trained to communicate the benefits and setup processes to patrons. Educational pamphlets specific to the library and online video tutorials will also encourage and diffuse hesitation with digital media. The website, online media, and social media tracks patrons' use which will provide tangible numbers to help determine the success of the education opportunities.

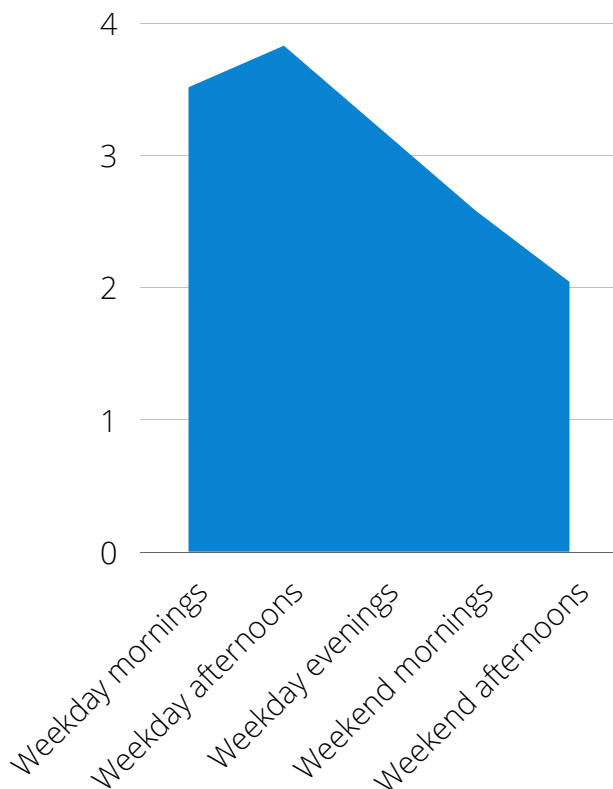
STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

INNOVATION-INCLUSION-COMMUNITY

INCREASE CIRCULATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

The number one motivator to visit the library for both infrequent library visitors and people who have never visited was better open hours. Satisfaction with library services was high across the board, but 'finding physical items in the collection' was rated 3.89 out of 5 (strongly agree).

- ☐ Extend library hours to better accommodate people's schedules.
- ☐ Maintain a welcoming library 'atmosphere' with relevant book displays, new release sections, comfortable study and reading space, and informative staff.
- ☐ Examine library sections to weed, expand and/or replace physical catalog items.
- ☐ In addition to curbside service, examine opportunities for home deliveries for elderly patrons.
- ☐ Hold periodic incentives for library patrons.
- ☐ Curate catalog selection for the community.



While the majority of patrons preferred weekday afternoons to visit the library, enough responded wanting some weekend hours to warrant consideration. Weeding and rearranging of the library following the recent remodel have made it ideal to add and augment the library collection to best fit the community's needs. Assessments should be made on catalog location codes to determine what areas are circulating well and if changes need to be made in other areas. The library still offers curbside services but further review of home delivery should be made. The library will continue to foster a warm environment to encourage patrons' visits but create incentives to bring new or lapsed patrons back to the library.

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

INNOVATION-INCLUSION-COMMUNITY

REDUCE BARRIERS TO LIBRARY SPACES AND MATERIALS

Respondents ages 34 and younger want more private work and study rooms with secondary space change priorities being collaborative workspace and teen space. Ages 35-54 want to see a dedicated teen space with secondary priorities being private work/study rooms and collaborative workspace.

- ☐ Look at reworking existing space or consider options to expand the library footprint for teen, study, and collaborative spaces.
- ☐ Expand Wonderbook, audiobook, and emergent reader books
- ☐ Add a world language section to reach more diverse patronage
- ☐ Look at expanding program options for the youth, teen, ethnic, and elderly populations
- ☐ Weed and update large print books



The largest demographic of library users are ages 25-44 with 87% reporting dependent children living at home. Many identified a need for private workspace, study rooms, teen space, and collaborative workspace. Common requests within the library are for locations to conduct remote work or group meeting spaces. Since completing a recent remodel of the library, it's recommended to find creative solutions to rework available space. Future considerations might look at opportunities to expand or source new library locations. Library materials and programs should benefit young families as well as ethnic groups within the community. Relevant programming and materials must also reflect the 39% of the survey participants who are ages 45 to 75+.

Physical Space Change	Weighted Score
#1 Add more private work/study rooms.	3.51
#2 Provide a dedicated teen space.	3.29
#3 Provide a dedicated collaborative workspace.	3.24

STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

INNOVATION-INCLUSION-COMMUNITY

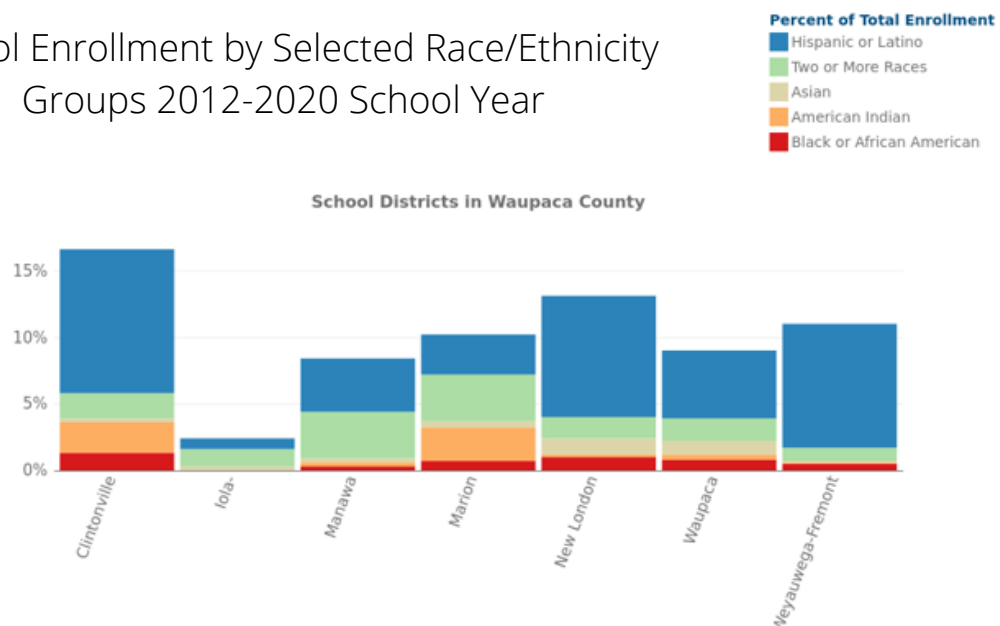
ESTABLISH NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING ONES

Community members' top priority for changes to library services is increasing coordination with local schools in providing resources to children.

- ☐ Work with teachers to help provide additional materials for their curriculum
- ☐ Hosting educational events in tandem with students
- ☐ Continue to build relationships with local daycares
- ☐ Assesses the need for afterschool tutoring program
- ☐ Bridge connection with student school clubs
- ☐ Reach out and maintain open communication between public school librarians
- ☐ Seek opportunities for in-school presentations and host field trips to encourage lifelong library patronage

The data revealed how diverse the school enrollment demographic is becoming, so by building relationships with our youngest patrons we are making strides toward becoming a more inclusive library as well.

School Enrollment by Selected Race/Ethnicity
Groups 2012-2020 School Year



STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS

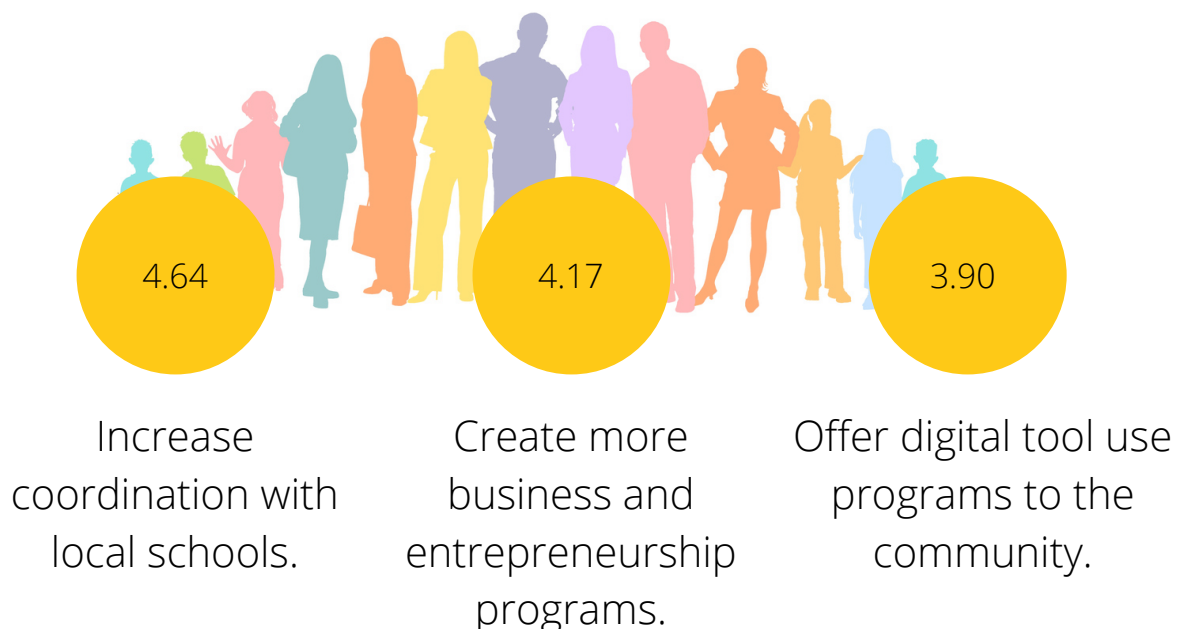
INNOVATION-INCLUSION-COMMUNITY

ESTABLISH NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING ONES

Other focuses of the survey are the creation of business and entrepreneurial programs and offering digital tools to be used throughout the community.

- ☐ Find avenues to facilitate joint community events and programs per year with area businesses or organizations for greater impact
- ☐ Examine entrepreneurial programs to participate in that will help foster new ideas for the community
- ☐ Create a community-driven video series to highlight reading, literature, businesses, people of interest, and other points of significance that showcase the region

Data pulled from the survey showed patrons' need for more business and entrepreneurial programs. Connecting with the area Chambers of Commerce would be beneficial to strengthen and build entrepreneurship in the community. New business opportunities will help add more vibrancy to communities. As a pillar of the community, library services should not be confined to the building and we should actively participate in outreach, social events, and programming. The development of a video series will be intended to showcase the region, invite tourism, and encourage the love for literature.





THANK YOU

We thank Fremont and surrounding communities for your ongoing support. We appreciate the time and thoughtfulness of those who responded to our community survey. Your input informed our strategic plan and helped ensure that we will serve the needs of our community.

Strategic Planning Committee

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Also, many thanks to the Wisconsin Library Services team, Laura Damon-Moore, and Melissa Mclimans, for providing the platform and groundwork for us to develop our strategic plan.



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